



Department of Justice

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JUSTICE DEPARTMENT APPROVES CINCINNATI ACCOUNTING FIRM'S DENTAL FEES SURVEY PROPOSAL

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- A Cincinnati public accounting firm will be allowed to compile and publish information on prices the firm's Cincinnati area dental clients charge for certain procedures, the Department of Justice's Antitrust Division said today.

The proposal by Seeskin, Paas, Blackburn and Company would enable the firm to collect price information from its dental clients on approximately 400 procedures and publish a report showing the high, low and average price for a given procedure.

Seeskin, Paas, Blackburn and Company represents 5 to 10 percent of dentists practicing in the Cincinnati area. In its request, Seeskin, Paas, Blackburn said there was a need for the firm and the dentists to have reliable statistical data available on how dental practices price various services provided to patients.

The Department's position was stated in a business review letter from Anne K. Bingaman, Assistant Attorney General in charge of the Antitrust Division.

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Bingaman's letter stated that the Department would be concerned if the proposed conduct were to increase the likelihood that participating dentists would collude on prices.

The letter noted, however, that the proposal contained safeguards against that possibility. The identity of dentists or specific prices charged by dentists participating in the program would not be disclosed, and to prevent such information from being inferred from the reports, Seeskin, Paas, Blackburn would not publish a charge survey for any specialty that contains fewer than five dentists.

Additionally, the information published would be historical, not prospective, and discounts from list prices would not be reported.

Under the Department's business review procedure, a person or organization may submit a proposed course of action to the Antitrust Division and receive a statement as to whether the Division will challenge the activity under the antitrust laws.

A file containing the business review request and the Department's response may be examined in the Legal Procedure Unit of the Antitrust Division, Room 3235, Department of Justice, Washington, D.C. 20530. After a 30-day waiting period, the documents supporting the business review will be added to the file.

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